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An Appeal to Communists in the Whole World

The appeal from a group of Ukrainian Communists published here is a relatively old document. It is dated December 1964. However, it is significant for two reasons. First, the accusations which the authors address to the leadership of the CPSU are no less real today than they were five years ago. Today, as then, the peoples of the Soviet Union are witnesses to the ever-increasing "rehabilitation" of Stalinism and the strengthening of the policies of centralization and Russification with respect to the non-Russian peoples of the USSR. Secondly, the appeal is interesting in that it shows that the arguments of Ukrainian self-defense and resistance (known to us from the writings of Ivan Dzyuba, Vyacheslav Chornovil, Valentyn Moroz, Mykhaylo Masyutko, Mykhaylo Horyn', Svyatoslav Karavansky and others) were already in the early sixties put forth by those elements of the CPU which were disturbed by the recidivisms of Stalinist practices in the party and by crass violations in the realm of nationality problems in the CPSU.

We have learned that the appeal published here was in its time sent to various non-Soviet Communist parties in and outside of Europe as well as to their press organs.

We are publishing this document without any changes in the Ukrainian text.

Translated from Ukrainian

TO THE COMMUNISTS OF ALL PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC AND
CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, TO THE LEADING ORGANS OF
THE COMMUNIST AND LABOR PARTIES OF THE WORLD

We, a group of Communists of the Ukraine, address to you our concern about the fate of the Communist and workers movement, about peace and the future, about all the people, and about the fate of our own Ukrainian people. We consider the present situation of the struggle of the workers for socialist and nationalist freedom needs open and principled discussions about the theory and practice of the Communist movement. Understanding all the difficulties and complexities of such discussions we see no other way.

The great October socialist revolution in Russia passed under the slogan of Marxism, and the society which was born as a result of its victory became the first form of practical existence of the theory of Communism. Workers of the world greeted and upheld the new order. In it they saw the beginning of the accomplishment of their ideals.

On the heels of humanity stands almost a half century of history of a new socialist system. The Soviet Union which stands at the front of the entire socialist camp announced final conquest of socialism and a change to Communism. The

program of the CPSU approved at the 22nd Party Congress designated a 20 year period for the building of Communism. Soon a certain people will create a paradise on earth... and we will be that people.

Such is the truth of the declaration. But people do not live by declarations. Actual life shows that theoretical dogmas hindered the free development of progress in the understanding and acts of humanity for the good of the individual, the people, the nation and humanity in general.

Through work we carried out our devotion to the ideals of Communism, peace, democracy and freedom, the idea of a classless Communist society. However, we want a society in which an individual will not be oppressed by the order of capitalism, the high-handed white, red or any other despot, the dictatorship of the party, the heel of the oppressor or colonizer, nor the fetish of theoretical dogmas and slogans.

We shall not analyze the theory and practice of the former period nor the present situation of the Communist movement: They have their historical achievements, thanks to the drawing forces of our ideals. We are concerned at present about the perspectives of these ideals. We must turn the attention of the Communists of the world to the truth of life in the Soviet Union which pretends to be the country with the most progressive and most honest socialist order in the World.

We are being reared in the spirit of barrack discipline: not to carry dirt out of the house. But the world already knows that there is dirt in our house. In the incitement of accusations against their predecessors, our leaders are forced to disclose the truth little by little. We suffocate from lies and falsehood. Mendacious propaganda which "saves the knights for the time being" has its reverse: it discredits in the eyes of new generations the very ideals of Communism. Therefore we must tell the whole truth.

In the USSR private ownership of means of production has been liquidated and exploitation of one class by the other destroyed. Can we be satisfied with centralization brought to absurdity, with economic monarchism of the Soviet state machine the subjectivism of which ruins the economy and is unable even to give material security to society? is the huge bureaucratic army of the privileged, highly paid, party officialdom -- not an exploiter of the working people? The government boasts about its rockets and sputniks. But is this equivalent with economic power and stability of society?

The construction of Communism is impossible without difficulties and mistakes but we would like to talk about these problems as masters, not to have to whisper about them. We would like to analyze our own difficulties and mistakes in order to find better ways of building communism. Here lies

the problem-that in the Soviet Union the human being is deprived of the elementary right to freely name the facts, to analyze them, and to draw conclusions from them. Civil liberties announced by the constitution are only a cynical phrase. The totalitarian system of lawlessness only speculates with progressive ideas. It harshly falsifies obvious facts and oppresses the smallest manifestation of personal freedom and demoralizes the people.

It is absolutely necessary to realize that the intention to force the objective process of progressive development of life into dogmatic schemes worked out in advance by a closed group of people is not only unrealistic but criminal as well.

It would be to no avail to explain to a foreign reader all the finesses of internal policy of a totalitarian state, all the truth about the position of the individual in every day life of Soviet society. We will name only those facts the nature of which is self evident.

The whole world knows about the horrible crimes of the Stalinist regime. Millions of people perished, the economy fell apart, suspicions, denunciations and slander became governmental policy and moral norm, and the party shouted about moral-political unity of the people, about happiness and prosperity, about the highest democracy in the world, about the successful building of people's ideals -- communist society...

"The great teacher of humanity", Joseph Stalin died. The CPSU found nothing better than to justify principles of social life of the Stalinist regime with the explanation that the great tragedy of millions of human beings and of entire peoples was just the "distortions" and "transgressions of socialist legality" by one individual of bad character. And the cult of personality was an accident and not the result of the system existing in the USSR. But let us look at what has changed today in the very mode of life?

At present, people are not being shot on the scale of Stalinist times but for freethinking, under any contrived reason, people are being sent (but we have no political prisoners!) to "non-existent" camps.

Nowadays the First Secretary of the CC CPSU can, contrary to common sense, oblige all republics to sow maize even where it cannot grow at all. As recently was admitted by the new CC CPSU everyone understood the senselessness of the party divisions into city and countryside sections. However, the people, as the Soviet press shouted, "unanimously approved this prudent decision."

Known meetings of the leaders of the party and government were reminiscent of the "witch-hunting" of Stalinist times.

At present cybernetics is no longer referred to as a bourgeois science thought out by capitalists to stupefy

the masses.. But, has anyone in the world heard of a case in the Soviet Union when facts were stated or ideas expressed which contradicted today's conjuncture? Today, Stalin is a genius leader and great continuator of Lenin's cause; tomorrow, he is an adventurer and criminal!

When criticism of the cult of Stalin began to deepen, when people desired to analyze what had happened, the party retreated as though Stalin had indulged in serious errors but he had been a great communist. A special censorship committee was established after Khrushchev's removal which has exclusive authority to permit criticism of Stalin. Yesterday, Khrushchev was a faithful Leninist, and today -- a decried actor. Only "the Leninist CC" has a right to know the whole truth, "the collective wisdom" of which, as demonstrated by reality, is incarnated in the person of the First Secretary...

Nowadays artificial famines are not created as was done in the Ukraine in 1933. However, when workers protest against an increase in prices and norms of production, which result from an adventurous economic policy, they are shot and crushed by tanks as happened last May in the city of Novocherkassk.

We do not accept as serious the declaration that socialist lawfulness and Leninist norms of social life have

been fully restored in the country. No one in our country is assured that the merciless machine ("Moscow does not believe in tears") of the annihilation of people will not start operating again! There is no guarantee and there can be none. On the contrary, facts indicate that the butchers are in readiness and the knives are being sharpened... Actually the machine of spiritual destruction of the people works continuously; people are being demoralized, and Russified, and they are losing faith in the ideals of justice.

While it is hypocritically said that the dictatorship of the proletariat has exhausted itself and an all-people's state has risen in its stead, in reality the dictatorship of the CC is being strengthened, and this is an expression of the will of the new ruling class -- the party bureaucracy.

According to the constitution the power belongs to Rady of Representatives of the working people. In the years of the Revolution millions went to their death for the power of Rady. But now the Rady (Soviety) have no meaning in social life. Even official propaganda has forgotten about them and continuously demands an "increase in the leading role of the party." But whither to increase it?

The role of Trade Unions and of other mass organizations also has been reduced to the collecting of membership fees

and mobilizing of the working people for various "campaigns" contrived by the leaders.

The centralized state-machine served by the excessively expanded apparatus of bureaucratic officialdom destroys even the faintest attempts of self-initiated creativeness of the masses.

The logical result of the socio-political regime in the Soviet Union is the nationalities policy of the CPSU.

The huge propaganda apparatus of the party indefatigably declares the equality and friendship of nations in the Soviet Union, the complete and definite solution of the nationalities question in the USSR.

In reality, however, under the mask of great ideals of internationalism and the brotherhood of peoples, Moscow is conducting a Russifying colonialist policy harsh and impudent in its methods and measures.

Russian great-power chauvinism is fanned according to plan and purpose; it devours great material and spiritual resources of the state; it -- we want to tell the entire world -- constitutes a continually increasing threat to the peace and security of peoples; it becomes a genuine flag of the largest empire in the world.

It has been said that the Ukraine is an independent nation. In fact, however, Ukraine, as well as other national republics of the USSR, is merely a colonial, administrative and territorial dependency of the Russian empire. The

government of the Ukrainian SSR does not have the right to make the smallest decision for itself without Moscow's consent. It sounds ridiculous but it is a fact: the First Secretary of the CC CPU, Shelest, had to obtain Moscow's permission to order the construction of a tunnel in Kiev. As a nation, Ukraine is deprived of any material means to defend her interests. Moscow's centralized policy has been reliably supported by a huge army of a corrupt, highly privileged and, to a great extent, denationalized bureaucracy. Simultaneously, nationally conscious Ukrainians have to keep their mouths shut.

The national question was not affected by any of the relaxations which have taken place in the life of our community since the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Economic, political and cultural centralism has remained unchanged.

It should be added that in April 1963 -- to counter a slight revival of the life in the republics which had followed the destalinization campaign -- the CC CPSU ordered secret meetings in those republics during which warnings were sounded against the alleged increase of nationalism in the Ukraine, in the Baltic states and the Caucasus. It is true no mass repressions were in the offing but it was hinted that all steps would be taken to fight nationalism.

Russification is being conducted on a wide front. Thus in the Ukraine the Ukrainian language has almost entirely been eliminated from use in State and Party institutions. Schools

and even kindergartens are Russified. High schools, colleges and universities have almost completely been Russified. Ukrainian sections of philological department are the only exception. The Ukraine which has given the world O. Dovzhenko does not have her own national cinematographic production. Almost all scientific books appear in Russian. Circulation of Ukrainian books is scanty. Everything has been done to keep Ukraine on the level of a province of Moscow.

The CPSU does all in its power to weaken the Ukrainian position. Under a noble slogan of mutual help of the cadres, Ukrainian intelligentsia, particularly engineers and scientists are sent beyond the borders of the republic. Recruiting stations set up in the Ukraine constantly encourage Ukrainians to move to the North, Far East, Siberia and Central Asia. Simultaneously many Russians, even unqualified workers, come to the Ukraine for permanent settlement, particularly in the Western regions. Is this sort of policy designed to serve the construction of communism or to strengthen Russian imperialism?

Russians living in the Ukraine have their own theaters, journals, newspapers, and a wide net of schools. There are nearly five million Ukrainians living in Russia. They have nothing, not even primary Ukrainian schools.

As a rule talented Ukrainian cultural workers are transferred to Russia. Thus for example, approximately 50%

of the staff of the Great Opera Theater were taken away from the Ukraine. Great material and spiritual resources of the national republics are destined to serve the "all-Russian" culture. Cultural groups visiting foreign countries and associations for cultural exchanges work for the propaganda of Russian culture.

Ukrainian people are not allowed to know their true history. The Russian historiographers have taken upon themselves the unsavory task of rehabilitating the predatory colonial czarist policy whose heir is the present dictatorship. Whatever opposes the idea of Russian centralism, is being denounced as "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism." It can only be defamed, not studied.

In May of this year (translator's note: 1964) an appalling event took place: fire was set to the National Public Library in Kiev. The entire Ukrainianistics^{was} burned. ^{the entire} spiritual treasures of the Ukrainian people were lost in the fire. And the press never bothered to even mention this great Ukrainian tragedy. Agents of the KGB (this state within the state) were busy spreading fatuous, provocative rumors that the incendiaries were Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists.

In spite of these unheard-of methods and dimensions of Moscow's assimilation policy, the Ukrainian people live and carry on their struggle. Ukrainian students have often been expelled from universities on the trumped-up charges of "nationalism." Political arrests and administrative repressions

are every day events in the Ukraine. In the summer of last year (translator's note: 1963) a group of Ukrainian constitutional lawyers prepared a memorandum for the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR and the United Nations on the legal status of the Ukraine in the USSR. The group was detected, eleven of its members were secretly shot and all documents were destroyed. A few months ago an armed band of Ukrainian peasants was seized in Ivano-Frankivska oblast. All over the Ukraine people are being searched, interrogated, dismissed from jobs, forced to leave their homes, hunted and arrested.

It is better to dismiss the boastful assertions of Pravda, that "separatist ideas", are far-fetched and futile. Those assertions are aimed at foreign countries. We know that the fate of the Ukrainian people is in their hands. However it grieves us to think that one day blood will flow because of the present egoistic and chauvinistic policy of the CPSU.

These are the true facts about the plight of the nationalities in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless the CPSU mendaciously claims to be proud of the "results of the Leninist national policy" of the Party.

Communists! The social-political and national policy of the CPSU can not be viewed as only our national affair. Life has proven that the demagogic slogan for world revolution serves as a covering for political adventurism and modern Russian imperialism.

The CPSU has been carrying on its chauvinistic policy under the slogans of amity, brotherhood and freedom of the peoples. At the same time a scholastic theory that communism creates one people with one culture and one language has been spread by all channels of propaganda. It stands to reason that the future language of humanity is supposed to be Russian. Be aware that this theory applies also to people beyond the borders of the USSR, although not as perceptibly at present. Back in the 1950's there had been talk in the Soviet Union about the possible incorporation of Poland and Czechoslovakia into the USSR. We wish to call your attention to the fact that this plan seemed quite natural to the bureaucratic section of Russian society.

Communists! We want to tell you frankly that we are very dismayed by the fact that you do not see or do not wish to see what is going on in the Soviet Union. In true diplomatic fashion, you take great pains to greet and glorify the USSR as a model of a just human society. We feel that the true interests of the communist movement should be put ahead of temporary political situations. For this reason we deeply appreciate Palmiro Togliatti and all Italian communists for their voice of truth and their apprehension at the fate of the communist movement.

Comrades communists! Friends by conviction! We would like to talk with you without having to disguise our faces,

as one equal to another. However, there is no inviolability of personal freedom in our country, not even a guarantee that we would be given an open trial for that "terrible crime" (that is how the bureaucratic apparatus sees our act). The one certainty would be bullets in our backs in the KGB torture chamber because courts are not juridically independent institutions in the USSR. They are fictitious, just as is freedom of speech, or the glorified Soviet democracy.

We request that you make this letter public and discuss it from a position of objective truth to which we all should aspire.

This letter has been prepared by an initiative committee. Its text was revealed individually to certain Ukrainian communists.

Communists of the Ukraine.